



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 6, 2019

Jim Watkins
Owner, 8chan
c/o Laughlin Associates (Registered Agent)
9120 Double Diamond Pkwy
Reno, NV 89521
Delivered via mail, e-mail, and Twitter

Dear Mr. Watkins:

As the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, we write in the wake of the August 3, 2019 domestic terrorist attack in El Paso, Texas. This attack resulted in the needless deaths of 22 people and the senseless wounding of 24 others. According to media reports, the killer wrote a manifesto describing his anti-immigrant, white supremacist beliefs and appears to have posted it to your website, 8chan, minutes prior to the shooting.¹

Regrettably, this is at least the third act of white supremacist extremist violence linked to your website this year. In April, the killer who murdered one Jewish worshiper and wounded three others at a synagogue in Poway, California, appears to have posted an anti-Semitic and racist open letter on 8chan shortly before carrying out the mass shooting.² In March, the killer who murdered 51 Muslim worshipers and wounded 49 more at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, appears to have posted on 8chan a 74-page manifesto outlining his racist, white supremacist, anti-immigrant beliefs, as well as a link to a Facebook livestream of the massacre.³

On August 5, 2019, your network service provider, Cloudflare, called 8chan a “cesspool of hate” before suspending service.⁴ Fredrick Brennan, 8chan’s founder, called the site “a complete negative to everybody except the users that are there,” and called for 8chan to be shut down.⁵ Experts have described 8chan as a platform for amplifying extremist views, leading to the radicalization of its users.⁶

¹ Kevin Roose, *8chan, Megaphone for Gunmen, Has Gone Dark. ‘Shut the Site Down,’ Says Its Creator.*, NEW YORK TIMES, Aug. 4, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/04/technology/8chan-shooting-manifesto.html>.

² John Gage, *California police investigate hate-filled 8chan manifesto that could link synagogue shooting to mosque attack*, WASHINGTON EXAMINER, Apr. 28, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/california-police-investigate-hate-filled-8chan-manifesto-that-could-link-synagogue-shooting-to-mosque-attack>.

³ Kristen Gelinau and Jon Gambrell, *New Zealand mosque shooter is a white nationalist who hates immigrants, documents and video reveal*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (available via CHICAGO TRIBUNE), Mar. 15, 2019, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-mosque-killer-white-supremacy-20190315-story.html>.

⁴ Matthew Prince, *Terminating Service for 8chan*, CLOUDFLARE BLOG, Aug. 5, 2019, <https://new.blog.cloudflare.com/terminating-service-for-8chan/>.

⁵ Kevin Roose, *8chan, Megaphone for Gunmen, Has Gone Dark. ‘Shut the Site Down,’ Says Its Creator.*, NEW YORK TIMES, Aug. 4, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/04/technology/8chan-shooting-manifesto.html>.

⁶ See, e.g., *id.* (Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League: “[8chan has] become a sounding board where people share ideas, and where these kinds of ideologies are amplified and expanded on, and ultimately, people are radicalized as a result.”); see also Robert Evans, *Ignore The Poway Synagogue Shooter’s Manifesto: Pay Attention To 8chan’s /pol/ Board*, BELLINGCAT, Apr. 28, 2019, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/americas/2019/04/28/ignore-the-poway-synagogue-shooters-manifesto-pay-attention-to-8chans-pol-board/> (“The overarching goal of /pol/, held by most of its members, is to radicalize their fellow anons to “real-life effortposting,” i.e. acts of violence in the physical world.”).

Americans deserve to know what, if anything, you, as the owner and operator, are doing to address the proliferation of extremist content on 8chan.

To that end, the Committee on Homeland Security respectfully requests your presence to provide testimony regarding 8chan's efforts to investigate and mitigate the proliferation of extremist content, including white supremacist extremist content, on your website.

Please provide the Committee with current physical contact information for you or your authorized representative in the United States so that you can receive communications from the Committee. The Committee can be reached at chs.inbox@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bennie G. Thompson", written over a horizontal line.

BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Rogers", written over a horizontal line.

MIKE ROGERS
Ranking Member